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**State Government & Tribal Affairs  
Committee**

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**HB 2579**

**Brief Description:** Addressing the revocation of signatures on ballot measures.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Liias, Upthegrove, Hunt and Moeller.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Provides a mechanism for the revocation of a signature on a petition for a proposed ballot measure.

**Hearing Date:** 1/28/10

**Staff:** Tracey O'Brien (786-7196).

**Background:**

Initiative and Referendum in Washington.

The Legislature adopted processes for initiative and referendum in 1912. The law as enacted allows:

- Initiatives to the People, where if petitions are certified to have a sufficient number of signatures by registered voters, the issue is submitted for a vote of the people at the next state general election;
- Initiatives to the Legislature, where if petitions are certified to have a sufficient number of signatures by registered voters, the issue is submitted to the Legislature at its next regular session;
- Referendum Measures, where laws recently passed by the Legislature are placed on the ballot after certification of petitions signed by registered voters; and
- Referendum Bills, where voters adopt laws proposed by the Legislature.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Under the State Constitution, initiative petitions require signatures from 8 percent of the total number of votes cast for the Office of Governor at the last regular gubernatorial election; referendum petitions require 4 percent.

The required form of initiative and referendum petitions is set forth in statute. First, a petition for initiative or referendum must include a place for each petitioner to sign and print his or her name, and the address, city, and county at which he or she is registered to vote.

It also must include a warning as well as language that each petition signer: has personally signed the petition; is a legal voter in Washington; verifies that his or her residence address is correctly stated; and has knowingly only signed the petition once. In addition, there is a declaration that states:

"I, . . . . ., swear or affirm under penalty of law that I circulated this sheet of the foregoing petition, and that, to the best of my knowledge, every person who signed this sheet of the foregoing petition knowingly and without any compensation or promise of compensation willingly signed his or her true name and that the information provided therewith is true and correct. I further acknowledge that under chapter 29A.84 RCW, forgery of signatures on this petition constitutes a class C felony, and that offering consideration or gratuity to any person to induce them to sign a petition is a gross misdemeanor, such violations being punishable by fine or imprisonment or both."

**Summary of Bill:**

Any person who signs a petition for a ballot measure may request that his or her signature be removed on that petition. This must be done by making a signed written request to the Secretary of State (SOS) and the request must be postmarked no later than the day signature petitions are due to be filed with the SOS. The SOS shall revoke a signature only in instances where the signature verification procedure necessitates all signatures on a petition be verified.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.